

2006 FEDERAL FUNDING REQUESTS

BRIEFING PAPER

Prepared for the

FEBRUARY 2005

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MEETING

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Approved by: Paula J. Hammond, Chief of Staff

PURPOSE:

To provide Commissioners with an update on the annual federal transportation funding process, the status of reauthorizing federal transportation law (TEA-21), and provide the reauthorization project funding request list submitted to the Congressional delegation.

ACTION/OUTCOME:

No action is required.

BACKGROUND:

Congress is starting over in trying to reauthorize a federal surface transportation law and is also starting over in collecting requests for project funding that might be included in the new law.

WSDOT has submitted its project funding requests to House members (attached). This is the same list you received last month, and nearly identical to the list submitted two years ago. House members publicly identified their reauthorization earmarks in the 2004 draft bill. Due to funding issues, it is unlikely that House members will receive additional funds to earmark, and it is problematic to “unearmark” a project and to fund a different project. In fact, most Congressional offices have indicated they are unlikely to deviate from their original earmark list.

Senators, on the other hand, have not publicly identified their earmarks, plus they may wish to fund projects that aren't earmarked by House members. Therefore WSDOT may add some requests to the Senate request list (to be submitted later this month) to give the Senators additional flexibility in selecting projects.

Over the last two years WSDOT has tried to create a more strategic and collaborative process for selecting projects to submit for federal funding consideration. The request list reflects (1) the direction of the Commission in building a potential project list for the State Legislature, (2) a geographic and modal distribution, (3) projects of specific Congressional interest, and (4) projects which have a connection to the potential RTID list.

The federal fiscal year 2006 appropriations process has begun, and WSDOT will submit its requests in early March.

Agenda Item # 14

Other topics to be covered briefly include: the Administration's budget proposal and its implications for federal transportation funding and WSDOT's support for local jurisdiction requests for federal funding.

RECOMMENDATION:

No recommendation is necessary.

For further information contact Larry Ehl, Federal Liaison at 360-705-7024 or by email.